

Enroll Men in Midwest Steel Mills; Foster Answers Green On Finances, Says Gompers Sabotaged 1919 Strike

**"Neither Pledged Nor
Gave a Dime" to
Start Campaign**

The American Federation of Labor's reactionary leadership "did not give a dime or pledge a dime" to start the great steel unionization campaign of 1919, nor did they initiate the campaign, William Z. Foster, leader of that campaign, charged yesterday to a representative of the Daily Worker, in answering the statement of William Green that Foster had "talked loosely" in accusing the A. F. of L. leadership of financial sabotage in the 1919 drive.

The entire twenty-four cooperating unions in the 1919 steel campaign advanced only \$101,047.52 to the drive, in the fourteen months' organization campaign and the three and one-half months of strike, Foster stated, quoting from the official financial report.

In contrast to this shameful showing, one union then outside the A. F. of L., the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America, contributed \$100,000 to the strike relief, or practically as much as the twenty-four cooperating unions put together.

When approached about the Green "answer" made in Washington on Friday, Foster said:

"Turn to Record"
"Mr. Green accuses me of talking loosely in charging the reactionary A. F. of L. leadership with financial sabotage in the 1919 steel campaign. Let us turn to the record and we will see who is talking loosely."

Then the leader of the greatest campaign and walk-out that has ever occurred in steel, proceeded to outline what had actually taken place.

"The 1919 campaign was not initiated by the American Federation of

Foster Outlines Organizing Tasks In Steel Drive

By WILLIAM Z. FOSTER

Article IV.

G—A Dauntless Movement

TO CARRY through the 1919 steel organizing campaign in the face of the great shortage of organizers and money, lack of solidarity among the unions, the unfavorable economic and political situation, etc., required imperatively that a high morale be developed among the organizing crew. In such hard conditions, the crew had to have boundless confidence in the organizability of the steel workers and also complete faith in its own ability to unite these masses into the unions. The crew also had to possess great flexibility in its organizing methods, in order to overcome the many difficult problems along the road. Then, as now, the steel industry could not be organized by the faint-hearted nor by men armed only with a blue-print plan.

The 1919 organizing crew managed to develop in high degree this necessary indomitable spirit, burning enthusiasm, and adaptability of methods, and it was these qualities which, in the final analysis, enabled the organization of the great masses of steel workers, notwithstanding the severe obstacles which the campaign faced. At the base of this high morale among the organizers (which they communicated to the masses) was, first of all, a good understanding and appreciation of the tremendous significance not only to the steel workers but to organized labor as a whole of the organization of the steel industry. Their morale was further strengthened by the special organization theory which we advocated. This theory proceeded upon a simple, but very dynamic three-phased analysis, as follows:

**Republic Steel Owners
Lie About Situation,
Threaten Workers**

By Hays Jones

(Sunday Worker Midwest Bureau)

CHICAGO, Ill., July 12.—With regional offices opened in Chicago, and district offices opened in Indiana Harbor, the steel organizing drive opened in the Calumet district. The spirit among the men is fine and the union is welcome.

There is general confidence among the steel workers that John L. Lewis and his industrial union plan can and will organize a union and raise the wages and better conditions.

They are certain that the steel trust will give nothing without a struggle.

Men Enrolling

Men are being enrolled daily in the A. A. without any noise or publicity, to protect the men who join, and to protect the union. The companies have made open threats to fire anybody who "interferes with production" and that means anybody who joins a union the steel barons don't control.

The newspapers are carrying on a campaign against unionization. It takes the form of assurance that "the workers won't strike, they're just getting a taste of work and don't want to lose it," or "the steel workers' wives won't let them strike." This sort of propaganda is being dished out by saloon keepers and other agents of the steel mills. The capitalist newspapers spread it far and wide. They also emphasize the fact that steel workers won't talk.

Spies in Steel Towns

They won't, because they know that capitalist newspapers work hand in glove with the steel trust, and they know that spies swarm through every part of the steel industry and the steel towns.

Van A. Bittner, regional organizer for the Steel Workers' Organizing

Foster Refutes Green Charge On 1919 Strike

(Continued from Page 1)

Labor," Foster stated emphatically, "but was upon the instance of the Chicago Federation of Labor, and originally upon a resolution that I presented to that body. The A. F. of L. had let the whole war-time situation slip by without any effort to organize steel, which should surprise nobody.

Gompers Had No Plan

"When, on August 1, 1918, the twenty-four cooperating organizations (in accordance with Resolution 20 introduced by the Chicago Federation of Labor at the St. Paul A. F. of L. convention) held their first meeting in the Morrison Hotel, Chicago, under the presidency of Gompers (with myself elected as secretary), Gompers had no plan whatsoever.

"All that Gompers was interested in at that meeting," Foster continues, "was to keep the movement tied to the Woodrow Wilson program. When the meeting had gotten under way, he turned to me and said: 'Well, Brother Foster, you called us together. Now what do you propose that we should do?'"

"Whereupon I outlined a program of organization based on Resolution 20 of the St. Paul convention, calling for a great national drive to organize the entire steel industry. In addition to providing for national and local organizing committees and for building a crew of organizers, my proposals also provided a financial plan."

Shows Original Plan

Foster brought out the original typewritten copy of the memorandum covering this program, worn with age, and referred to it.

"The three principal features of this proposed financial plan were: (a) Assistance from the A. F. of L.; (b) Assistance from the cooperating international unions through an assessment; (c) An appeal to the labor movement generally.

"In accordance with this plan, I proposed the levying of an assessment of 25 cents per member by the twenty-four international unions. As there were about 2,000,000 members affiliated to our committee, this would have brought in from \$250,000 to \$500,000 to finance the campaign.

Gompers Opposed

"Mr. Gompers was so obviously opposed to this proposition, as I made it, that there was not a second to my proposal. It was not even discussed. And so far as the proposal for A. F. of L. financial assistance was concerned, nothing at all was done about it. The whole matter was ignored. The A. F. of L. had no proposal of any kind to make financially and made no pledges, as the

organization. They will also touch upon the other lessons of the organization upon these articles, who considered the organization task. The decisive thing is to necessary resources, determine. The American Federation organized the steel industry many to do so, and the same is in my book "The Great Steel

working men into trade unions matter when it is properly entirely upon the honesty, persistence of the organization

wealth and latent power, it that there isn't an industry in the union movement cannot or. The problem in any case is per organization crews and hungry workers, skilled and lack or white, will react almost as water runs down hill."

for C.I.O.

and the line-up in the present that the C.I.O. organizers, not. Executive Council sabotage, the necessary funds, skill and problem will come, as it did in which practically certainly must iron will sit down around the the trade unions. We may be never give up the open shop do so by the militant mass. While, of course, the workers settlement without the necessity little choice in the matter, but C.I.O. should, therefore, lay the organization of labor's forces—steel mobile workers, rubber workers, bers, in preparation for a hard-gest capitalists in America. d be put forth to prevent the of A. F. of L. and to develop a united ass and its sympathizers, among the strike comes, it should be successful strike in the history

the steel industry, and victory to shatter the central anti-union. In 1919 we planned that with we would launch a great or at all the principal unorganized same perspective opens up in the steel campaign, and win tically to mobilize the forces asis, the final outcome should nization of the 500,000 steel workers in many other indus- can be developed into the greatest labor, and thereby throw ew era of progress industrially g masses.

(This is the last article of this series.)

Steel Drive Stirs Chicago Mill Area; Many Join Union

(Continued on Page 2)

statement that employees elect their own representatives, but would have nothing to say about the affairs of their union.

Republic Steel's fear of organization among its employees is obvious in the circular. The steel corporations remember how near they were to losing their slave-owner status in 1919.

"Representatives of radical and communistic groups are helping in this movement," says the circular. "William Z. Foster, Chairman of the Communist Party has announced his support. Foster was the leader in the unsuccessful attempt to unionize the steel industry in 1919." The steel workers will remember that struggle, and the steel companies' terroristic practices.

Explain Open Shop Plan

Under the subtitle "What they Want" the steel barons "explain" their open shop and company union schemes.

"Your Employee Representation Plan is not run by outsiders. It works," says the company document. "Under your Plan you select your own Employee Representatives — men you know and with whom you work. Under a union you would be represented by outsiders who may know little about your problems, your management, or the steel industry. Furthermore,

printed minutes show. In short, as was said in my first press interview, the A. F. of L. neither gave a dime nor pledged a dime to begin the campaign."

As for the twenty-four co-operating unions, taking the tip from Gompers' attitude they did but little better, Foster stated.

"The only concrete action on money taken at this first crucial meeting in the Hotel Morrison on Aug. 1 and 2, 1918," he continued, referring to the official printed minutes of that meeting, "was to adopt a motion that the co-operating organizations contribute \$100 each to the campaign."

Foster Confirmed By Records

The official printed minutes confirm his statement, for in these minutes the following appears: "Moved that the organizations present make an initial contribution of \$100 each to the organizing fund of the National Committee, and that the Secretary-Treasurer request those not present to do likewise. Adopted."

And with this ridiculous sum, Foster and a handful of organizers were turned loose to start a broad national drive against the greatest capitalist concern in existence, the Steel Trust.

"Mind you," Foster emphasized, "this petty amount was voted in spite of the fact that these organizations had millions of dollars in their treasuries from their greatly increased war-time membership. After six weeks, I had managed to collect only \$1,400 of this money, and with this small sum the campaign had to begin."

Confined Drive

At this point Foster turned to the effects of this "financial sabotage" on the organization campaign. "The failure to adopt the proposal of an assessment wrecked the entire national movement," he stated, vigorously. "It confined the drive to one district. This permitted the Steel Trust to attack the union movement in all the other areas, with us handicapped by lack of funds and doing intensive work only in the Chicago region. It was a full year before we managed to fight the movement up to a national scale.

"That is not all," Foster continued. "After the collection of the first \$1,400, which barely allowed us to start work, the steel organizing campaign became practically self-supporting financially from funds collected from the steel workers themselves through initiation fees.

Steel Workers Gave Funds

"During the course of the next fourteen months of the organizing campaign and the three and one-half months of strike, we managed to get the twenty-four co-operating unions to contribute \$101,047.52—not only to organize the steel workers generally but also to feed the 355,000 workers on strike! But even this stingy contribution of these unions was offset by at least \$400,000 that we turned over to them in initiation fees.

"In my book on the strike I showed conclusively (and no one ever challenged the figures) that counting all the union's expenses for their own organizers, the steel workers themselves furnished the funds for the drive.

"As to the A. F. of L. leaders," Foster went on, "they made no effort whatsoever to remedy this scandalous lack of financial support for the steel campaign. They raised no money themselves, and did not help us to raise any. On the contrary, their whole attitude of indifference and hostility to the campaign encouraged the internationals (save two or three of them) not to give the drive any real support."

Handful of Organizers

"The only help we got from the A. F. of L. was a handful of organizers; several of them useless, that we finally succeeded in wangling from the A. F. of L. national office. "As I declared in my original statement in the Daily Worker," Foster continued, "the A. F. of L. raised no funds whatsoever for the organization campaign, the only funds that finally came through the hands of the A. F. of L. (mostly through the efforts of the steel organizing committee) were strike relief funds and came long after the outbreak of the strike—fourteen months after the beginning of the organization campaign and after we had the bulk of the workers organized and 385,000 of them on the streets, striking.

"You will see here the official printed A. F. of L. financial report on the strike fund," he stated, referring to that document. "It deals

you would have no choice in their selection," it lies in the company interest.

The kernel of the matter is the open threat to fire anyone who dares join the union. It comes under the heading: What is Republic's Stand?

Stands for Open Shop

"Republic stands for the 'Open Shop.' No employee has to join any organization to get or hold a job." It says nothing about firing him if he does, but steel workers know from experience.

And then the direct threat:

"Republic will not permit any activities within its plants which will:

- 1—Interfere with orderly conduct of its operations.
- 2—Stir up strife or discontent.
- 3—Threaten the peace and comfort of its workers and their families."

"Every Republic employe owes a duty of loyalty to the company so that its best interests may be served," says the document — but nothing about the best interests of the men.

It is signed by the President, Executive Vice-President and General Manager, Vice-President in Charge of Operations, and the District Manager.

Every worker in the Inland Steel Corporation, So. Chicago and Gary subsidiary, got a copy of this intimidating document.

with the first financial help received from the A. F. of L. national office. It is the report on the funds raised by a general call to the unions to help the steel strikers. But note carefully the date of it. This appeal was issued on Oct. 28, 1919; that is, fourteen months after we had begun the organizing campaign (Aug. 1, 1918) and five weeks after the strike had begun (Sept. 22, 1919).

A. F. of L. Appeal

"And how reluctantly the A. F. of L. issued this year-beleated appeal. I remember very distinctly when we proposed this appeal to Mr. Gompers. He received the proposition very coldly, as he received every other financial proposal to help the steel drive. He said he questioned very much the advisability of this appeal because they had just put out such a general appeal for the striking cigarmakers of New York, and had received in response, as he put it, 'hardly enough to pay the expenses of the appeal.'

"We pressed him further, however, and he finally agreed to issue the appeal for funds to the general labor movement. He could hardly refuse us outright. But, characteristically, after issuing the appeal, the A. F. of L. did nothing further about the matter. As I said in my statement in the Daily Worker, the National Steel Committee had to organize a corps of field organizers, who toured the country and collected the bulk of the \$418,161.14 finally raised to feed the strikers. Among these field organizers were Anton Johansson, Joe Cannon, Jennie Matyas, J. W. Brown, G. A. Gerber, J. Sause and many others.

"I myself spoke at a meeting at Madison Square Garden on Nov. 8, 1919, where \$150,000 was raised, principally from the needle trades unions (Amalgamated Clothing Workers, International Ladies Garment Workers, Furriers) and other progressive New York labor organizations. All of these funds, collected by our organizers in the field, were sent directly to the A. F. of L. national office, and helped to make up the total, for which Mr. Green brazenly tries to take credit for the A. F. of L. chair-warming bureaucrats.

Financing Sabotaged

"I maintain (as I stated before) that the A. F. of L. general office sabotaged the financing of the 1919 steel drive, and the facts prove it. The A. F. of L. leaders gave no funds whatsoever to the fourteen months' organization drive and did not help us to collect any from the international unions. The strike appeal that they finally reluctantly issued was forced from them by our pressure, and we then raised the great bulk of the funds by our own direct efforts. And all this sabotage was in line with their general attitude of indifference and even of hostility to the steel campaign.

"Never in the history of the A. F. of L. have its reactionary leaders sincerely undertaken the organization of the steel workers themselves, or given real support to such an organizational effort. They did not do it in 1919 and they are not doing it now. Their whole line in 1919 was one of obstruction and it is the same in the present campaign.

A Progressive Path

"The forces that must organize the steel workers are the progressive wing of the labor movement. This was shown in 1919, when the campaign was led by Farmer-Laborites, Syndicalists, Socialists, etc., and now is being made clear again by the Committee for Industrial Organization, which now is the main center of the progressive forces in the A. F. of L.

"In 1919 the A. F. of L. leaders were afraid that if the steel campaign, headed by John Fitzpatrick and myself, were successful, it would upset their reactionary regime and set the A. F. of L. upon a progressive path. That's why they sabotaged the 1919 steel campaign, and that's precisely why they are sabotaging the present organizational drive under the leadership of John L. Lewis."

Baltimore Explosion

Kills 3, Injures 8

BALTIMORE, Md., July 12. — Three persons are believed killed and eight are known injured as a result of burning and explosion of a large quantity of alcohol from a railroad tank to the warehouse of A. L. Webb and Sons naval stores company. Two Negro workers and a stenographer are missing.